

## **MEETING RECORD**

**NAME OF GROUP:** NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Thursday, March 23, 2006, 8:00 a.m., Room 206, County-City Building, 555 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

**MEMBERS AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

<b>Members:</b>	Jim Hewitt, Tom Laging, V.J. Nelson, Jeff Searcy and Kim Todd. Karen Kilgarin and Patrick O'Donnell absent.
<b>Others:</b>	Jeff Cole (Urban Development); Nicole Thompson (UNL Student); Jerry Shorney (Parks and Recreation); Jeff Bargar and Bess Scott (McPhee School); Liz Shea McCoy and Vicki Rankin (Public Art Project); Bob Ripley (Capitol Administration); Ed Zimmer and Michele Abendroth (Planning Department).

**STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING:** Regular Meeting of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

Chair Searcy called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

### **Approval of meeting notes of January 26, 2006**

Nelson moved approval of the January 26, 2006 meeting notes, seconded by Todd. Motion carried 4-0. Hewitt, Nelson, Searcy and Todd voting 'yes'; Kilgarin, Laging and O'Donnell absent.

### **Review of landscape design for McPhee Elementary School, bounded by S. 15<sup>th</sup>, S. 16<sup>th</sup>, F and G Streets**

Kim Todd stated that her landscaping class began the landscaping project at McPhee Elementary last year. One of the drivers is a grant that McPhee received from the state planting arboretum. The money needs to be spent by June of this year. They have a master plan for the entire campus and then phase 1 and 2 for the grounds. They will get price quotes from two or three nurseries. The landscape students will help with the installation for phase 1.

Jeff Bargar, McPhee Parent Teachers Association, stated that the neighborhood is unique, diverse, low-income, and multi-cultural. He feels that the green spaces are learning opportunities for the students. It is also unique in that the school is next to the capitol. The PTA has had a dream to create a green space at the school. They feel that this project could be the start of neighborhood revitalization.

Bess Scott stated that the community learning center has three goals, which are to increase academic achievement, strengthen families and strengthening neighborhoods. They believe this project will strengthen the City, neighborhood and capitol environs area.

Commissioners agreed that this project is a wonderful improvement to the school and the community.

Nelson moved approval of the project, seconded by Hewitt. Motion carried 5-0. Hewitt, Laging, Nelson, Searcy and Todd voting 'yes'; Kilgarin and O'Donnell absent.

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**Sidewalk Café in Capitol Environs District, Ali Baba's at 112 N. 14<sup>th</sup> Street**

Zimmer displayed a site plan for the café. Cole stated that 14<sup>th</sup> Street between O and P is a future sidewalk planting area and restoration. The owner wants to have some outdoor dining and provide protection for the windows.

Laging stated that he likes the proposal but is concerned about the planter box width because of pedestrian traffic.

Zimmer stated that this proposal goes to the Outdoor Dining Committee this morning.

Todd moved approval of the project with the removal of the plant material; seconded by Nelson. Motion carried 5-0. Hewitt, Laging, Nelson, Searcy and Todd voting 'yes'; Kilgarin and O'Donnell absent.

**Discussion of concept for "Sower" public art project (temporary and permanent components) on Centennial Mall**

Liz Shea McCoy stated that she and Vicki Rankin are co-chairing the "Sower" public art project. They are proposing a statewide public art project focusing on both artistic and educational components of our Capitol and the state of Nebraska. They want to raise awareness of Centennial Mall's condition and pride of ownership. Their objective is to raise \$7 million from the private sector to renovate Centennial Mall. They want to reinforce that the design of Centennial Mall is the Commission's domain. They feel this is a win-win situation. They have the energy, enthusiasm and organizational skills to accomplish this. They feel that this is a good time to start this project.

The sowers would be 8 feet tall and would be displayed along Centennial Mall. They will have one model. They would like all 93 counties to participate in this project. Each county would submit two projects created by Nebraska artists. A big part of this project is education, and they want to create a curriculum for the schools.

Laging stated that he appreciates the objectives, but he feels timing may be a concern. He also expressed a concern with replicating the iconic piece of art such as the sower. Shea McCoy stated that they felt the sower was a piece of art everyone could identify with because it is the state image. They want to create an image that the artist can be creative with. Zimmer stated that the sower has a lot of context and he has a concern with using this image that has been an icon. Todd also has the same concerns. She also expressed a concern with the timing of the project and bringing attention to something that we do not have the funds for right now.

Zimmer asked how they were going to raise the money. Shea McCoy stated that they intend to travel across the state and educate the citizens about the Mall and the need for improvements. They feel there could be many investors.

Laging stated that the Commission has always been concerned with public art, but he is not sure public art is needed on the Mall. He feels the effort is great, but the needs on the Mall are in landscaping, water features and things that would enhance the Mall in the future.

Hewitt asked if the sculptures would be auctioned at the end of the project. Shea McCoy stated they anticipate each county would purchase their sculpture at an auction and display it in their county.

Hewitt stated that one concern he has is that this project could fail as \$7 million is an ambitious amount of money to raise, although he does have great faith in the artistic community. He questioned if it does fail if it will affect future opportunities to raise money for renovations of the Mall.

Zimmer suggested that perhaps a permanent representation for each county along the Mall, possibly in the sidewalks, may be a better project.

Laging stated that he is excited about their enthusiasm for this project, but questioned whether this is the right project.

Nelson stated that she is concerned with the current public safety issues on the Mall, so it is a concern to bring people to the Mall to view these sculptures.

Laging encouraged them to slow down the project and work with the Commission to find an image that will work for the project.

Todd stated that she cannot support the concept of the sower even as a temporary sculpture on the Mall. She also feels that involving the Arts Council is critical in the process.

Searcy thanked Shea McCoy and Rankin for bringing this project to the Commission.

### **Staff Report**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:28 a.m.

*\*\*Please note that these minutes will not be formally approved until the next meeting of the Capitol Environs Commission. \*\**

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